

# IS YOUR HOME TOWN IN THE UNITED STATES?

## Read this Story of Jeffersonville and Be Sure About It

### If You Are Annexed to Hunland You Should Soon Find It Out

### Patriotism Is Asleep In Some Places and Must Be Awakened

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Somehow the very first mention of a Fifth Liberty Loan left the little town of Jeffersonville cold.

And yet Jeffersonville had been patriotic enough in the flaming days when the men of America were setting their faces toward the East and moving by train and truckload to the Atlantic ports. Its boys had gone, some by enlistment, some by the slower process of the draft. Its women had worked their fingers sore in the Red Cross rooms over the Town Hall. The war drives had gone through with a whoop. The Liberty Bond quotas, those of the First, the Second, the Third and the Fourth had been oversubscribed at the last minute. Yes, Jeffersonville had been average patriotic.

Maybe it was war weariness. Maybe it was just indifference, a feeling that as soon as the boys came home everything would fall back into the old comfortable ways of the days before the Kaiserlings went mad back in 1914, and that a restful, even a slumberous peace would again descend over the old-timey brick and frame houses and the maple-lined streets that wandered on out into the country and lost themselves in pleasant country highways through cornfields, alfalfa meadows, clumps of woods and gently rolling hills.

But this time Jeffersonville was sort of resentful. The boys were coming back one and two at a time. Jeffersonville wanted them all back at once. The oracles under the maple trees, the loungers by the store in the cobbler's shop, the drugstore hangers on, the pool room followers, they were all airing their views.

Jeffersonville was tired of the war. It was tired of reading about it, tired of hearing about it. The gentry who backed up against the depot wall and watched No. 24 come in from the east every afternoon were busy criticizing the Government. They were divided about the League of Nations, some holding that it would be a mighty fine thing, others inclining to the belief that "Wall Street must be mixed up in it somehow," but on the Liberty Loan there was little difference of opinion.

#### The Hot-Stove League.

It was in Jake Jackson's harness shop that most of the under-current of old Jeffersonville's opinion was formed. Around the glowing stove, while old Jake stitched on a set of leather tugs, the talk swung and circled. "It's this way," said Clem Jones, "the price is so infernal high on everything that I buy, that I don't have a dollar left, after I pay my taxes. And furthermore, I want to tell you fellows that this income tax this year gets 'em all and believe me it bites deep."

"Ain't it the truth," said Harve Clark, "and I give it out that this old Government'll have to worry along without me buying any more bonds. Holy Cats, have you noticed what that luxury tax is going to do to the prices of men's shoes and hats and shirts, to say nothing of clothes? Why, a man'll have to go around in sack cloth and ashes when that tax gets its teeth in good."

Harve, it may be noted, was the town's Beau Brummel, who wore a shirt a full two months before any one in Jeffersonville knew what the thing was and whose neckties were never more than 30 minutes behind those of Broadway and Michigan avenue. Between giving his fellow townspeople a daily treat in admiring him Harve worked at managing a

produce house and cream station.

"I don't see how I am going to find any money for it," said Alex Karnes, a big young farmer from up the turnpike. "I would like to buy some spring wheat seed and see if I can't pick up some of that \$2.26 a bushel for wheat that the Government's guaranteed for this year. I think we could grow it around here if the season happened to be just about right. Yes, I think I will hold on to my dough and see if I can't make me a little piece of money this fall."

#### The Teuton's View.

"I got all the talk about the war and those Liberty Bonds, I want to hear any way," grunted Ben Ochs, the butcher. "It is a foolishness. For why should I give more money so Yankee soldiers can be kept over in Germany? What business we got mixed those soldiers over here? I say let 'em come home!"

"Und," he went on warning to his subject, "I say let dem big vellers, dem Rockefeller and dem Morgans and dem oder big guys dake dis loan. Let dese bankers dot run around after us last fall and make us sign oop, let dem dake the loan. Bah! War is ofer, what ve care. Ve don't have to buy no more. Ve do as ve dam please, now I guess. I got about enough of dis tam Yankee fool—"

Maybe if Sim White's bull dog hadn't taken this exact instant to hop all spraddled out on Jerry Keegan's mastiff, Ochs would have gone on and said what was in the Teuton heart of him and Jeffersonville would have promptly resented it and in the act of setting Ben Ochs right would probably have set itself right. But the dog fight drew 'em all into the half-lighted street and by the time the two pups had been hammered apart the gang that poured out of Jackson's harness shop had just about forgotten any and everything that had been said.

It was a mild winter and the folks of Jeffersonville were abroad a good deal. The farmers from the surrounding country were in town regularly all winter long. But in all the little groups that formed on street corners, in the Post Office, in the stores and at the railway station, little was said about the coming Liberty Loan.

#### Patriotism Asleep.

"Can't see the reason for it," said Sid Price, "and I got better places to put my money than in any long-term, less than six per cent Government loan. All right for widders and such to buy 'em, but I want my money to earn me somethin'."

And it was. He must have been the man of whom it was first said that he would skin a flea for its hide and tallow and he was currently reported to have an armful of 7 per cent farm mortgages locked up in a vault. In the first four loans the Liberty Loan Committees had all but used forceps and a branding iron to get any kind of a subscription out of him.

And old Sid climbed into his buckboard buggy and struck out through the mud of late winter in search of another victim.

So Jeffersonville went along that way. The spring winds came and the mud dried up and the young shoots made a bronze mist of baby foliage in the tops of the maple trees. There were dandelions on the lawns and along the board walks but Jeffersonville's attitude did not soften with the advancing year. Jeffersonville had just about made up its mind. The war was over anyway, the boys were coming back, things were going to be all right and Jeffersonville was going to hold on to its money. Hadn't it done all right on everything else and who could expect a neighborhood to

go right along forever, buying and giving and giving? The townsfolk were careful to lay a lot of emphasis on the "giving."

In the meanwhile the \$20 per 100 hogs and the \$2.26 a bushel wheat was moving to market right along with the high-priced beeves and the eggs de luxe and all the other high-priced foodstuffs that were coming from the country in which most of Jeffersonville was vitally interested. There was more money being spent than ever before in the history of the town. Nearly everybody had a car ordered and the income tax paid with some weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and much "inward bleeding" was being forgotten. The dealers were busy selling new pumps, new plows, a tractor now and then and many, many motor cars. The piano and organ man, who also sold talking machines, was congratulating himself on a record business. The milliners and dry goods people were not complaining, thank you.

#### Loan Talk Avoided.

In the meanwhile the ships were bringing thousands of young Americans home. And Central Europe was beginning to rumble and emit volcanic lightnings. Jeffersonville was not looking much further than its immediate horizon—than the counters and the ledgers and the farms and the fields, the getting and buying and selling. Jeffersonville, as has been noted, was trying its best to forget all about the war.

The Loan started. All over the nation devoted men and women bent to the task of raising the money so urgently needed for the financing of the United States of America in its year after the war. The Liberty Loan posters and literature sent to Jeffersonville were left in the express office. The town slept placidly on. It seemed to have been forgotten by the county organization. No one disturbed it.

Nevertheless Jeffersonville could not entirely forget the Victory Loan. The newspapers were talking about it. It was in full swing all over the country with the usual agonizing uncertainties as to what district was going to first clear the ropes with its quota subscribed. Jeffersonville stirred faintly in its sleep and a few of the dyed-in-wool Americans placed their subscriptions and began to remonstrate.

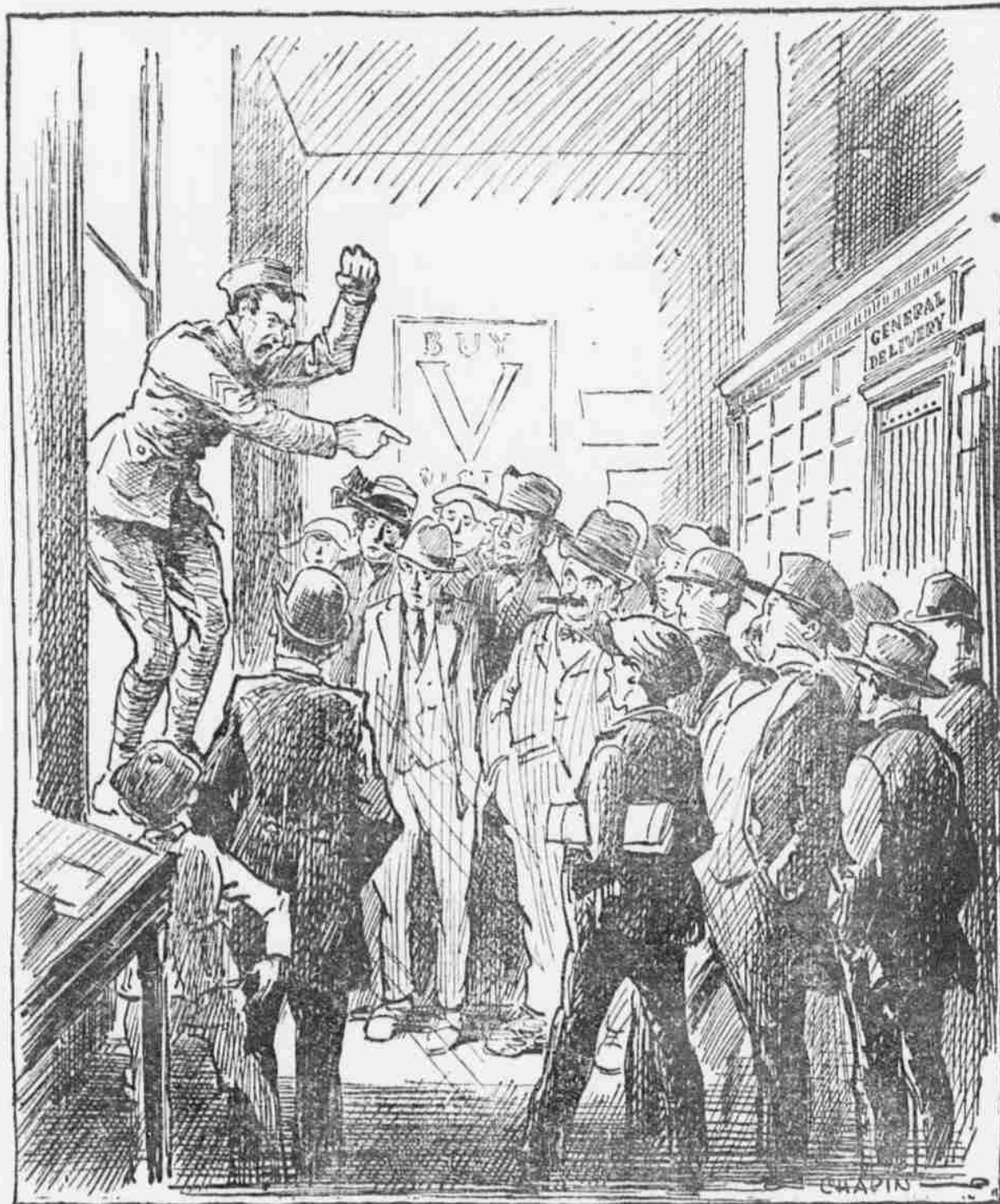
However, it was tacitly understood in Jeffersonville that the loan was not a subject of general conversation. The weather was never more talked about anywhere than it was in that little town for a few days. Then the workers, those who had bestirred themselves in the other loans, began to feel uneasy and conscience-stricken. Men began to mention the loan, sort of tentatively.

Then Jeffersonville went through another curious phase. It began to try and persuade itself that the loan ought to fail and that it would fail. "Teach these Smart Alecks down to Washington sumthin'," muttered more than one Jeffersonville citizen to himself.

#### Beginning to Sting 'Em.

Telegrams and long distance calls began to sting a few of the citizens but they managed to forget about them in a day or so. The Loan was moving along day by day but Jeffersonville's quota was hanging fire. Ben Ochs was chuckling to himself and cautiously imparting his views to a few of his intimates. The humbling of Germany was a bitter dose for him. He would keep still when he had to, but he was more than pleased to see that Jeffersonville was not bothering itself about the "fool loan." It pleased the Hunnish soul of him to feel that the "Yankee pigs" were indifferent to their loan. He could not forget that his brother and cousins had worn the helmets of the Kaiser's guard with "Gott Mit Uns" on their belt buckles and he had gloated with them, in imagination, over the spoil and the loot that was to have been theirs in Paris and London. So he strengthened the determination of his acquaintances not to sign for a dollar's worth of bonds and felt better for doing so every night.

## The Sergeant Calling 'Em Down



"DON'T YOU KNOW THIS COUNTRY ISN'T OUT OF THE WOODS YET?"

Then something happened that drove Jeffersonville into hysterical wakefulness. It seemed that the town's indifference was being rather widely advertised and the time had come when personal and vigorous work had to be done by the district loan committee. And the weapon, the very instrument came shaped to their hand.

He was a boyish young soldier, with deep set eyes. He wore a wound chevron and the gold service stripes that told of months of overseas service. And he hated a slacker and he hated a Hun and he had no patience with the mouthy J. who loved to carry morbid tales, who loved to hint at troubles between the Allies. And a few years before he had lived in Jeffersonville and he knew every man and woman in it and most of the children. And—he had gone into Argonne Wood and the Meuse Elbow and the barbed wire hell that the Germans had made of the old Hindenburg Line, elbow to elbow with the home town boys from Jeffersonville.

Chance, aided by some design, sent him to Jeffersonville a the Liberty Loan drive for the Fifth and, the last of the series was turning into the home stretch. It was the business of Sergeant Colvin, late of the 38th Machine Gun Battalion, to find what was ailing the old home-town folks.

He believed in a frontal attack. The first man he saw was Old Brown, banker and real estate man, the head of the somnolent loan organization. He waved aside all congratulations and inquiries and plunged straight in. "What is the matter with this loan organization of yours, sir?" and there was a snap and click in every word.

"We—ll," began the banker man, "the town doesn't seem to be very much interested this time—"

"You were interested last July, weren't you?" asked the Sergeant. "Interested when it looked like the Hun had the Allies down?"

"Yes, we did right well then."

"Can't this town do anything unless it is scared into it?" asked the soldier. "You could see this bank in the hands of a bunch of Huns last year and your vaults being cleaned out. Do you forget that quick? Do you have to see a bunch of Germans on the horizon before your patriotism begins to work? Now, let's get busy. Don't you think you could round up a bunch of the workers this afternoon and let's get started?"

Sergeant Colvin headed for the Post Office. The mail was in and the crowd was dense in the little lobby. He couldn't see a poster or a handbill. The loan might as well be under way in Soochow. This town was dead from the ankles up, he thought to himself. The postmaster was dim-eyed and non-committal. He "figgered it

wasn't his place to make folks subscribe."

It was then that Sergeant Colvin took the "bit in his teeth" and swung himself up on the broad window ledge and "opened up."

#### What He Told Them.

"I used to know you all," he said, his voice stilling the hum of conversation in the office, "but that is neither here nor there. I could call every one of you by name. I came down to this man's town to see what was the matter with an American community that is so dead in the shell that it has forgotten the war before the wounds of its own boys have healed. I wanted to find out what is the matter with an American community that is playing right into the hands of every Hun who is still alive and full of poison."

"Don't you know that this country isn't out of the woods yet? That we've got a big job on our hands over there? That there are over a million Americans still in France and Germany? Don't you know that you sent them there to do your work and to do your fighting and that they did what they were sent to do? And don't you know that this community has turned its back on its own boys who died over there and who are buried three thousand miles from this little town?"

The crowd stirred uneasily. Men looked at their neighbors. Why, the thing seemed different now. It was like a voice from the half-forgotten army talking to them. Had they failed? Hadn't they made their work good? Somehow all the indifference about the loan didn't seem so flaccid and so funny as it had a while ago.

#### Forgotten So Soon.

"Are you going to desert and forget those boys over there on the Rhine?" went on the speaker. "Are you going to forget the chaps who died in shell holes, twisted with the gas-agonies, the boys who were riddled with machine gun bullets, who died remembering this little place and knowing they would never see it again? I want to tell you that they are watching you from over there, the chaps who have not been relieved. They want to see if you meant what you told 'em when they left, that you were back of 'em to the finish. A fellow thinks a lot about such things when he is 3,000 miles from home."

"We kind o' got a notion, mister feller, that we did our part," piped a voice from the end of the lobby, as though in explanation and self-defense.

"You do, do you? You have, have you?" said the man in uniform. "I wonder if you really think that? You've been here at home. You haven't been out o' God's own country. You never heard a bullet whistle in your life. You never swallowed down the gas, that burns the insides out of you. You never lay wounded for sixteen hours in No Man's Land. You never missed sleepin' in a bed one night durin' the war. You were never a German prisoner and had your ribs kicked loose from your spine. I won-

der if you mean that you went ahead about your business. Wages went up and prices went up and you bought Liberty Bonds the first times and you helped with the Red Cross and so on.

"But it makes me sick to hear a man who never got out of rifle shot of his own front door says that he did as much to help win this war as the man who hopped over in No Man's Land and wrestled with the barbed wire, with machine gun bullets and Bosch bayonets. That is plain bunk. You've got a good ways to go yet, my friends, before you can say that. I here and now call a meeting at the Opera House this night at 7:30 and let's be there and see if we can't keep this town from acting like an annex of Hun land about this Liberty Bond business."

Before noon every human being in Jeffersonville heard about it. Some were angry, some were ashamed, others were enthused and the town buzzed like a hornet's nest.

#### A Town Redeemed.

But a flag here and there began to make its appearance. Men began to do sums in mental arithmetic. They also began to make up their minds to get to the night meeting. The thing was more serious than they had thought. Sergeant Colvin spent a busy afternoon. When Sid Price heard he was headed for his office he hurried out, climbed in the buckboard and struck out for the country to be gone two days. Colvin made a house-to-house canvass of the village. He said some stirring things and some jarring things. But Jeffersonville was getting wider awake every moment.

Jeffersonville didn't like to look at its own actions, when it became fully awake. The phones were busy that afternoon and early evening. The town was making up its mind. There was much scanning of quotas past and present. There was much furtive hurrying to and fro in the early evening. Then came 7:30 and the hall was jammed early—every seat filled. The crowd had hardly settled when Old Brown rose and walked heavily up the aisle, clambered to the little stage and raised his hand.

"You know what we are here for," he said. "We have been a mighty foolish little town. This day we were reminded that we were still in the United States. We had been acting as though we had forgotten it or succeeded from it."

"Now, we can make this thing short and snappy. Blanks have been distributed. There is no use in any speeches. Let's put our names down, raise our part of this loan and do the talking afterwards!"

Oh, yes, about every man in the town enrolled himself. Yes, Ben Ochs, Teuton enough to scent trouble for himself if he didn't, was one of the first subscribers. He had seen to it that other Teutonophiles had done the same. The quota was well over subscribed, the next day a few stragglers were rounded up and Jeffersonville came back into the United States of America with a whoop.

And they located Sid Price on a country phone line down in the river bottom country and in the hearing of some thirty eavesdroppers on the line told him what his quota would be. It was a little bigger than it was in the Fourth Loan, but he gave the committee no back talk.